

# Jane Elliott Diversity Training: Information Obtained by Miriam Tyson

## Background Information

Jane Elliott received her teaching degree from the University of Northern Iowa. Chosen as ABC-TV's "Person of the Week," Jane is the adaptor of the "**Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes**" **discrimination experiment**. This groundbreaking exercise is the pinnacle of all other diversity programming in the country today.

The original sensitizing exercise began in a third-grade classroom in all-white, all-Christian Riceville, Iowa, immediately after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Participants were labeled inferior or superior based on the color of their eyes. It has been repeated with dramatic results with children and adults throughout the country. Those who have been through this exercise have said it is an emotionally significant and life-changing experience.

With a large group, Ms. Elliott recommends a *three-hour program*. This will not be the exercise but rather a discussion of the exercise, some interaction, and a speech on power, culture and racism.

It is best to have the audience **not** view her films prior to attending this program. After the visit with Mrs. Elliott, it would be good for the supervisors to show the films to their smaller teams.

## For the State of Iowa

- 1) Target audience: supervisors and managers.
- 2) Potential of 2,000 to attend program.
- 3) Various scenarios include:
  - One large event for all 2,000 in one morning session: \$7,500 and travel expenses.
  - Two events in one day, each having 1,000 people: \$12,000 and travel expenses.
  - If conducting the training over a few days:
    - Two days with one event in each day: \$15,000 and travel expenses.
    - Two days with two events in each day (there must be a day off between the two): \$23,000.
- 4) Once everyone has gone through the program, conduct a follow-up meeting with small groups to view the films.
- 5) Having the supervisors attend the lecture will begin a better practices effort on their part when they are interviewing and setting standards by which applicants and new hires need to adhere.
- 6) New hires should view the films and follow an instructor's guide to create a common culture of best practices.